The Humble

PETITION

OF THE

Major, Aldermen, Bayliffs, and Commonalty of the City of *Oxon*, in the County of *OXON*:

TO THE

Supreame Authority

OF THE

NATION,

THE

COMMONS in PARLIAMENT Assembled.

VVith their Grievances annexed, and the Parliaments Answer thereunto.

LONDON,

Printed for *Giles Calvert*, at the Black-spred-Eagle at the West-end of Pauls, 1649.

Die Veneris. 6. April. 1649.

ORdered by the Commons Assembled in Parliament, That the humble Petition of the Major, Aldermen, Bayliffs, and Commonalty of the City of *Oxon*, in the County of *Oxon*, be referred unto

Sir *Arthur Haslerig.*
Sir *James Harrington.*
Sir *John Danvers.*
Mr. *Whitlock.*
Mr. *Humphrey Edwards.*
Mr. *Dove.*
Mr. *Whitacre.*
Mr. *Say.*
Sr. *John Hypisly.*
Mr. *Smith.*
Mr. *Lemon.*
Mr. *James Chalenor.*
Mr. *Thomas Chalenor.*
Sir *Thomas Wroth.*
Mr. *Ashe.*
Mr. *Allen.*
Mr. *Salway.*
Sir *G. Norton.*
Alderman *Wilson.*
Mr. *Millington.*
Mr. *Oldsworth.*
Colonel *Ven.*
Colonel *Moor.*
Lord *Gray.*
Mr. *Fenwick.*
Mr. *Scot.*
Mr. *Garland.*
Mr. *Love.*
Mr. *Masham.*
Mr. *Boon.*
Mr. *Bosvile.*
Mr. *Blackiston.*
Mr. *Pury.*
Mr. *Weaver.*
Mr. *Gurdon.*

To the Supream Authority of the Nation, the Commons in Parliament assembled.

The Humble Petition of the Major, Aldermen, Bayliffs, and Commonaltie of the City of Oxon, *in the County of* Oxon.

Humbly sheweth,

THat they taking notice of the late memorable Acts of Parliament, made for regulating of the Privy Council, and for taking away of the Court of Star-Chamber, the high Commission Court, and others of the like nature; and being thereby made sensible of your worthy intentions to disinslave the free-born People of this Nation from all manner of Arbitrary Judicature or Power, and enable them to live like Freemen under the known Laws of this Land; are thereby at this present emboldned to make known unto you, the most intollerable sufferings and oppressions, which they for a long time past, and yet by an Arbitrary and unlimited power exercised over them by the Universitty of *Oxon*, have under-gone, and at this time suffer, as by particulars hereunto annexed may appear,

And for redress whereof your distressed Petitioners humbly implore your gracious assistance.

And whereas your Petitioners at this present, partly through decay of trading, and partly through the long and daily pay-

ments, taxes, and quartering of Souldiers are very much impoveriſhed, and their City abounding with ſuch multitudes of poor people, that they are not able to relieve them without proviſion of a convenient ſtock wherewithall to ſet them on work; for the raiſing whereof, there is a certain large piece of ground, called *Portmeade*, lying neer the ſaid City, wherein your, Petitioners have the Inheritance, and the Village of *Woolvercot* only Common of paſture therein by reaſon of vicinage, which being, encloſed and leaſed out for certain years would raiſe a convenient ſtock for the relief and ſetting on work of the ſaid poor. The which your Petitioners are very deſirous, and have much indeavoured to effect, but have been, and ſtill are hindred in theſe their pious, and good intentions, by the Inhabitants of *Woolvercot* aforeſaid; Albeit your Petitioners have been, and are willing to allow them a proportionable quantity of ground, to be allotted them out of the ſaid ground in lieu of their ſaid Common.

Your Petitioners likewiſe humbly pray, that they be enabled by Authority of this preſent Parliament, to encloſe, and demiſe for ſome competent number of years, the ſaid ground called *Portmeade*, for the uſe aforeſaid, leaving a proportionable quantity of ground, or otherwiſe allowing ſome ſufficient recompence unto the ſaid Inhabitants of *Woolvercot* in lieu thereof,

All which we refer to the wiſdom and judgment of this Honorable Houſe, humbly deſiring your ſerious and ſpeedy conſiderations, and reſolutions herein, and to make ſuch order for your Peticioners relief, touching the premiſes, as you in your grave wiſdoms ſhall think meet and expedient.

And we ſhall ever pray, &c.

A Schedule of the Cities Grievances claimed, and at ſeveral times put in execution againſt them by the Univerſity.

1. THe Univerſity claimeth power to determine all controverſies whatſoever, between any perſons whatſoever, if one of the parties be a priviledged perſon (except in caſes of maime felony & freehold) & they claime allowance of their priviledges in all other Courts, without pleading of them, and without fee; and to try matters of fact without Jury, or without open examination of the witneſſes in the caſe, but only in private, before a Regiſter; and proceed in an Eccleſiaſticall way, by citation, excommunication, and the like, contrary to the courſe of the Common Laws; and their ſentences are not grounded upon any certaine Law, either Civil, Canon, Statute, or Common Law, but *ſecundum equum & bonum*, and meerly Arbitrary, at the will of the Vice-Chancellor, or his Vice-Chancellor againſt whoſe ſentence, how unreaſonable ſoever, no Writ of Error will be by them allowed, or other redreſs admitted, but only by Appeal before themſelves, in their Convocation or Congregation, in which particular, the Citizens finde themſelves much grieved, being by thoſe proceedings not only delayed, but oftentimes defeated of their juſt debts, without any redreſs at all.

2. Without any lawful power they take upon them to make Proclamations, thereby impoſing not only penary mulcts, but alſo impriſonment upon ſuch perſons as ſhall not obey their matters contained in ſuch Proclamations, and this not only upon Citizens, but likewiſe upon all others, dwelling within five miles of *Oxon*.

3. They claim & exerciſe a power over the Citizens, to impoſe 40 s. upon any Citizen, being found out of his houſe after 9 of the clock, albeit it be in the ſummer time; and albeit they be Conſtable in their ſearch for Fellons, upon perſuit of hue and cry; or Aldermen of the City, or Juſtices of the Peace,

in

in conveying of Malefactors to the Goal, or the like; and for default of presene payment of the 40s. to send them to prison, there to continue until satisfaction made to the Proctors,

4. They claim the sole power of Licensing of Ale-houses, Brewers, and Maulsters, and usually take for the making of Licences for Brewers to Brew, and for Maulsters to make Mault 17s. 8d. and take Recognizances of the Alehouse-Keepers, but never return any of them to the Quarter Sessions.

5. They have challenged to have powers, and *de facto* have exercised a power, to pull down the Citizens Houses of Habitation; and some of the Butchers Shambles within the City.

6. They take upon them power to dis-common Citizens at their pleasure, and to inhibite all priviledged persons, to have any commerce or trading with them; which power they have also exercised upon divers Citizens.

7. They exact from the Mayor, and sixty two Citizens, an Oath for the maintenance of the University Priviledges; whereas many of their pretended Priviledges are meer Usurpations and Incroachments upon the liberties of the City, which the Citizens by their Oaths are bound to preserve.

8. They claim and exercise a power to enforce the Major, and sixty two Burgesses of the City, to come yeerly to Saint *Maries* Church on the tenth of *February* (called by them *Scholastims* day) to make an Oblation at the High Altar, of sixty three pence, for the slaughter of sixty three Scholars, *tempore Ed.* 3. to procure a Mass for the souls of the sixty three slaughtered persons; for the non-performance whereof, they give forth, That they will put a Bond in suit, which the City in those days entered into to the University.

9. They claim a power to make By-laws, thereby to binde the Inhabitants of the City, which are meer strangers, and were never called to the making of them.

10. They take upon them power to make new Officers, as Tole-takers of Corn, and the like; and they constitute Coroners,

ners, which Office of Right belongeth to the City by their ancient Charters, and Uſage, time out of minde.

11. They claim Fellons Goods, and Deodans, by their new Charter, albeit the City time out of memory hath enjoyed, and hath right unto them by their ancient Charters, as they conceive; and albeit, the City be at the charge of keeping of Fellons, and of the delivery of them.

12. The Market, the Soyl, and the Streets belong to the Citizens, together with Toll, Stallage, and Picage, yet the Univerſity claimeth all theſe; and divers times by Proclamation alter the Market days, whereas the Univerſity have onely the Clarkſhip of the Market, and the perquiſites, and profits thereof, belong to the City toward their Fee-farm Rent.

13. They ſet up divers Taverns in *Oxon*, and will not permit the City to ſet up any, contrary to the true intent of the Statute of 7. *Ed.* 6.

14. They claim power to ſet up Trades within the City, and to authorize Forraigners to exerciſe any Trade there, as fully as a Freeman of the City; and that albeit ſuch Forraigner never ſerved as an Apprentice.

15. In caſe the City puniſheth any irregular Freeman for miſdemeanor, or make any By-law for regulating of ſuch miſdemeanor, they preſently become ſervant to ſome Maſter of Arts, or elſe to be an under Gardner to ſome Colledg, or Hall, and thereby exerciſe their Trades, in contempt of the City, and their By-laws, and refuſe to pay any payments with the City, except ſuch as ſhall be warrantable under the Seal of the Univerſity.

Die

Die Veneris April 6. 1649.

THe Houſe being informed that there were Gentlemen of Oxfordſhire at the door, they were called in, and the Mayor of *Oxford* preſented a Petition to the Houſe, which after the Petitioners were withdrawn, was read, and was Intituled, *The Humble Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, Burgeſſes and Commonalty of the City of* Oxon, *in the County of* Oxon.

Ordered, That the conſideration of the Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, Burgeſſes and Commonalty of the City of *Oxon*, and the Particulars thereunto annexed, be referred to the ſame Committee, to whom the Petition of the Inhabitants of the County of *Oxon* is referred.

The Petitioners being called in, Mr. Speaker by Command of the Houſe, gave them this Anſwer:

Mr. Mayor of Oxford, *and you the Aldermen, and others, the Houſe hath read your Petition, and are ſenſible of any grievance that may happen to the people, and in particular, of any grievance that may happen to you, and have appointed a Committee to ſit this afternoon in the Dutchy Chamber, to take your Petition into conſideration; and for the manner of delivering your Petetion, They take notice of your modeſty and good affections, and have commanded me to return you thanks, and I do in their names returns you thanks for your good affections.*

Hen: Scobel, Cleric. Parliamenti.

FINIS.